United Nations E/CN.17/2008/12/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 February 2008

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Sixteenth session
5-16 May 2008
Item 3 of the provisional agenda[1]
Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009 — review session

Regional statement on agriculture and rural development, land, drought and desertification, and Africa

Report of the Regional Implementation Meeting for Africa (Addis Ababa, 22-25 October 2007)

Summary

In its resolution 58/218, the General Assembly mandated the regional commissions to provide regional input to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development by organizing regional implementation meetings. In keeping with this mandate and in preparation for the sixteenth session of the Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), held a regional implementation meeting in Addis Ababa from 22 to 25 October 2007. The meeting reviewed implementation progress, reflected on and identified main challenges, constraints, opportunities, lessons learned and priority approaches for further implementation in Africa of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation).

The meeting reviewed the thematic cluster of issues being considered by the Commission at its sixteenth session, namely agriculture and rural development (see sect. I), land (see sect. II), drought and desertification (see sect. III) and Africa (see sect. IV). Under Africa, the meeting devoted attention to sustainable development governance in Africa; poverty alleviation and socially sustainable development; sustainable consumption and production; the natural resource base of economic and social development; means of implementation; and harnessing interlinkages. To undertake the review, the meeting had before it as background documents a number

[1] E/CN.17/2008/1.

08-23901 (E) 200308

of review reports covering all aspects of the thematic cluster of issues. The review reports provide specific details on the issues covered by the present report.

The meeting recalled commitments that have been made by African countries including in the United Nations Millennium Declaration; the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and multilateral environment agreements and protocols. The meeting also recalled and expressed support for various initiatives undertaken by African countries at the national and regional levels, including within the framework of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation recognizes as providing a framework for sustainable development on the continent.

The meeting reaffirmed that peace, security, good governance and poverty eradication are indispensable requirements for sustainable development and reiterated the need to address in a balanced way all three components of sustainable development — economic growth and development, social development and environmental protection. The meeting called for the enforcement of gender-responsive policies and ensuring transparency in financial, monetary and trading systems, which also constitute central elements in achieving sustainable development.

The meeting expressed concern on Africa's low annual growth rate of food production, which is lower than the population growth rate and has led to high levels of food insecurity and famine in the region. The meeting therefore welcomed the emerging increased political commitment and actions for agricultural and rural development in the region, including through the development of the NEPAD/Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme. It also recognized the opportunities for fostering sustainable development presented by other AU and NEPAD programmes.

The meeting highlighted that land lies at the heart of social, political and economic life in Africa. It stressed that equitable access to land and security of tenure, especially for rural poor people, is central to sustainable land management and poverty reduction in the region.

The meeting expressed deep concern at the heavy and continuing impact of land degradation, desertification and drought on social, economic and environmental conditions in the region. In particular, it highlighted the fact that efforts to reduce poverty, improve access to adequate water supply and achieve food security are being severely undermined by land degradation and desertification, which are steadily expanding, and by the droughts which have become more frequent, severe and wider in occurrence in the region.

The meeting underlined the grossly inadequate capacity of the region to adapt to the impacts of climate variability and change. The meeting therefore expressed serious concern about the emerging evidence indicating that the region will face early and disproportionately devastating climate change impacts, in particular the fact that climate change will exacerbate drought and desertification and floods, undermine agricultural production and food security, and cause increased conflicts and insecurity.

The meeting emphasized that responses to the challenges of climate change, drought, land degradation, desertification, agricultural and rural development are essential and integral for effectively tackling poverty and propagating peace, stability and security in the region.

The meeting noted that while countries have undertaken a number of concrete actions and made some progress in various areas, a lot remained to be done to widen and deepen the reach in terms of poverty reduction, improved livelihoods and economic growth.

The meeting expressed appreciation to bilateral and multilateral development partners for the support provided, which has enabled the region to develop and implement strategies and programmes in pursuit of the development goals and targets agreed at the global, regional and national levels.

The meeting acknowledged with appreciation the vital role played by the business sector, civil society, including women, indigenous people, and youth, and the need to ensure their full participation in achieving sustainable development.

The meeting identified concrete actions taken and progress made, as well as main challenges and constraints, and recommended priority approaches and actions under each of the thematic cluster of issues, as set out in sections I to IV below.

I. Agriculture and rural development

Concrete actions taken and progress made

1. The meeting identified the following main concrete actions taken and progress made:

(a) **In the area of agricultural productivity and food security enhancement and poverty reduction:**

(i) The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is collaborating with NEPAD in supporting the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and provides joint support to the harmonization of procedures and practices in rural development;

(ii) The regional economic communities have benefited from regional programmes for food security aimed at promoting collective action and strengthening national food security programmes;

(iii) A revised African Regional Nutritional Strategy (2005-2015) has been produced, among others, to increase awareness among policymakers on nutrition problems, and to advocate and stimulate actions at the national and regional levels that lead to improved nutrition outcomes;

(iv) Productivity of livestock and some crops, including cassava, rice and beans, has been boosted through promoting high yielding, disease-resistant and pest-resistant breeds and varieties;

(v) A programme for a green revolution in Africa has been launched and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa is providing support to help develop improved crop varieties, train scientists, ensure that improved seeds reach smallholder farmers, and develop a network of dealers to ease the access of small-scale farmers to agricultural inputs;

(vi) With the support of country technology transfer projects in over 15 countries in the region, maize and wheat yields have been boosted in some countries;

(b) **In the area of investment in agriculture, including agricultural research:**

(i) There is ihcreased recognition by African leaders of the importance of increasing public investment in agriculture, as reflected in, among others, the adoption in the Maputo Declaration (2003) of the target to allocate 10 per cent or more of national budgets to agriculture and rural development by 2008;

(ii) Countries are benefiting from programmes aimed at sustained agricultural growth through strengthened agricultural knowledge systems and the delivery of profitable and sustainable technologies;

(iii) Innovative mechanisms for funding agricultural research and development, such as competitive funds, have been initiated in several countries;

(c) In the area of sustainable land management:

(i) Land reforms have been carried out or are under way in several African countries to increase land tenure security and stability in order to encourage investments in sustainable land management and to modernize agriculture. In addition, a land policy initiative is under implementation to develop an Africa-wide land policy framework and guidelines to facilitate and provide further support to upscale land policy reforms;

(ii) Regional and subregional cooperation and programmes on sustainable land management have been stimulated through the development of the NEPAD environment action plan and NEPAD/CAADP;

(iii) TerrAfrica has been established as a partnership mechanism to support countries to mobilize resources and to scale up coordinated investments in sustainable land management for sustainable agriculture and rural development and poverty reduction;

(iv) Several countries are carrying out activities related to sustainable land management as part of the efforts and measures to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and related national action programmes;

(v) Political commitment and support has been achieved in support of increased fertilizer use in the region. The 2006 Abuja Summit on Fertilizers reached an agreement to increase fertilizer use to at least 50 kilograms per hectare (kg/ha) by the year 2015 and to establish an African fertilizer financing mechanism to finance fertilizer investments;

(d) In the area of integrated water resources management:

(i) There has been increased and strong political commitment by African leaders to confront the water challenges in the region, as demonstrated by the establishment of the African Minister's Council on Water, the African Water Task Force and the African Water Facility. Such initiatives as a medium to long-term strategic framework and a short-term action plan, which address water supply, sanitation and integrated water resources management, have been launched;

(ii) A strong effort is being exerted to establish new, or strengthen existing, water basin organizations in Africa. In this connection, the African Network of Basin Organizations has been formed;

(iii) Thirteen countries are already benefiting from the African Development Bank (AfDB) Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative, funded through an AfDB trust fund;

(e) In the area of development of holistic policies for sustainable agriculture and rural development in Africa:

(i) NEPAD/CAADP has been developed and adopted as the framework to address Africa's issues and priorities in agricultural and rural development in a coordinated and integrated manner;

(ii) Many commitments and targets that provide strong political support for CAADP have been agreed upon. These include the 2003 Maputo Declaration,

calling for 10 per cent of total public expenditure to be spent on agriculture and rural development; the 2006 Abuja Declaration on Fertilizers, calling for an increase in fertilizer use from 8 to 50 kg/ha by 2015; and the 2004 Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development on Agriculture and Water in Africa;

(iii) Several countries and subregional organizations have developed and embarked on the implementation of comprehensive and realistic policies and plans for rural development and agricultural modernization that are aligned with CAADP principles and linked directly with national growth and poverty reduction strategies;

(iv) Some subregions, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have already started implementing CAADP priority activities;

(f) In the area of decentralization and capacity strengthening in support of sustainable agriculture and rural development:

(i) Many African countries have adopted and are implementing decentralization policies, as a result of which many local governments are increasingly being integrated into public expenditure systems, while participatory planning and the transfer of development resources to local governments and communities are increasing;

(ii) The capacity of rural farmers and their organizations to voice their needs and participate in agricultural policy dialogue has been enhanced;

(iii) Through the review of their cooperatives policies, some African States are also undertaking legislative and institutional reforms granting greater autonomy to cooperatives and limiting the role of Governments in their development;

(g) In the area of integrated pest management:

(i) Some West African countries have benefited from integrated pest management research projects, and have developed and are implementing a regional pest management system for whitefly pests, tomato viral diseases, information on the influence of agroecosystem biodiversity on plant virus levels, a regional quality assurance programme addressing pesticide safety education and pesticide residue chemistry training;

(ii) Some countries in the region have been assisted to develop national integrated pest management strategies and to train farmers;

(iii) Delivery and access to integrated pest management information is being promoted;

(iv) Countries in the region are being supported to clean up and dispose of existing pesticide stockpiles through the Africa Stockpiles Programme;

(h) In the area of rural energy:

Initiatives have emerged that are supporting countries in the region to increase energy production and to expand access to clean and productive energy in rural areas.

Major challenges and constraints

2. The meeting identified the following major challenges and constraints in this area:

(i) Poverty is the single most influential factor and impediment in achieving food and energy security and for the sustainable provision of basic water and sanitation services;

(ii) Climate variability and the projected impacts of climate change in the region pose serious constraints and challenges for sustainable agriculture and rural development given the associated high magnitude and occurrence of natural disasters such as drought, floods and earthquakes;

(iii) Land degradation, desertification and unsustainable agricultural practices remain major challenges to sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(iv) Heavily subsidized agricultural products in developed countries present a major obstacle to African agricultural export growth and competitiveness;

(v) Inadequate investment and funding, including the steady fall in official development assistance (ODA) for sustainable agriculture and rural development, and the low prioritization of sustainable agriculture and rural development research and extension in national development plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers;

(vi) Inadequate investment in infrastructure;

(vii) Limited access to markets by small-scale farmers;

(viii) The inadequate budget and institutional capacity among decentralized systems to plan and deliver sustainable agriculture and rural development services. For example, reforms of extension services have left an institutional void which could hinder access to agricultural innovation. The producers' organizations and private-sector actors do not yet have sufficient human and financial capacity to take over;

(ix) Lack of data and poor access to sustainable agriculture and rural development information, which impedes effective tracking of progress, policy development and planning for sustainable agriculture and rural development. This includes the paucity of data on water resources, which is a key factor constraining effective water resources development;

(x) Lack of the necessary enabling environment for private-sector participation in sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(xi) Sub-optimal policy and regulatory frameworks; lack of energy access strategies in national development plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers; and limited central government funding for the sector, which undermines energy development, particularly for farming and other productive activities in rural and peri-urban areas;

(xii) The low level of development of water resources, which is grossly inadequate to meet the growing demand for water in response to population growth, agricultural development and other economic activities;

(xiii) The slow pace in the adoption by multilateral and bilateral agencies of NEPAD/CAADP principles and frameworks in their development assistance;

(xiv) Farmers' needs and those of agri-business do not sufficiently drive the orientation of agricultural research and extension services, causing lack of relevance, ineffective transfer of technologies and low impact of research on agricultural development;

(xv) The high incidence of HIV/AIDS in some countries, which constitutes a major burden for sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(xvi) Political instability and human-induced disasters, including conflicts occurring in many countries and between countries, constitute a big threat to rural poverty reduction, food security and sustainable rural development;

(xvii) Highly skewed income distribution, which inhibits economic growth;

(xviii) High rates of population growth, urbanization and poor natural resource management, which put enormous pressure on land, freshwater and other natural resources that are consequently becoming degraded and depleted.

Lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions

3. The following are the main lessons learned and recommended priority actions identified by the meeting in this area:

(i) There is a need to align development assistance with CAADP objectives and principles to secure the commitment of partners to work with national Governments and the private sector to meet the required level of investments in agriculture and rural development. In this connection, there is a need to avoid setting up new processes and build on ongoing efforts at the national level; align national efforts with CAADP growth and budgetary, food and nutrition security objectives; and add value to national efforts, where needed;

(ii) There is a need to define the core areas for the 10 per cent budget allocation agreed in the Maputo declaration and to establish a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring progress towards the target. In this connection, national and regional capacity should be built to track expenditure on agriculture;

(iii) There is a need for donors and central Governments to pull together. Development partners therefore need to adopt harmonized approaches and flexibility on funding disbursement procedures and conditionality, and to deliver sustainable agriculture and rural development assistance within national strategic frameworks rather than in fragmented project-by-project approaches. At the same time, the domestic resources base for investments in sustainable agriculture and rural development needs to be expanded by enhancing national policy coherence, commitment and prioritization in national development programmes, including poverty reduction strategy papers;

(iv) Financing opportunities such as microcredit facilities, cooperatives, carbon financing (e.g., through Clean Development Mechanism opportunities) need to be explored and/or widened;

(v) Enhancing access to markets for small-scale farmers has been identified as an important element of sustainable agriculture and rural development in Africa;

(vi) Human and institutional capacity, particularly among decentralized systems, civil society, farmer organizations and the private sector, should be strengthened as a critical component of sustainable agriculture and rural development in the region;

(vii) There is a need to develop and promote adequate access to rural infrastructure and agricultural inputs in order to strengthen growth in agriculture, as well as growth in non-farm economy and rural towns;

(viii) Energy access for agriculture and rural development need to be a clear priority in national macro- and sectoral policies. Capacity for the planning and implementation of energy projects needs to be enhanced. Countries also need to act regionally to optimize the use of energy resources and expand investment in the energy sector;

(ix) The sustainable agriculture and rural development decentralization process should be embedded in a permanent institutional structure, with stronger, more inclusive civil society and community empowerment, direct transfer of resources, and stronger and more accountable local governments;

(x) A conducive environment should be created and promoted for private sector participation and to increase investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(xi) Distortions in prices of agricultural products need to be removed to provide incentives for farmers to invest and produce;

(xii) Agricultural research and extension services and access to appropriate and affordable technologies, including agricultural inputs and technologies to harness water for sustainable land management, should be significantly expanded and promoted in order to increase agricultural productivity;

(xiii) Higher public and private-sector investments in rural infrastructure, communications and marketing, as well as improved provision of health and education services, are essential for raising farmers' productivity;

(xiv) The improvement and/or promotion of trade opportunities through fair global trade and regional trade integration are key and integral elements of sustainable agriculture and rural development in Africa;

(xv) There is a need for upscale policy reforms on land and other natural resources to guarantee secure and equitable access to, and sustainable use of, land, water and other natural resources. Bringing land and other natural resources policies and the performance of related institutions within the framework of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism could be a useful way of reinforcing the momentum for reform.

II. Land

Concrete actions taken and progress made

4. The meeting identified the following main concrete actions taken and progress made in this area:

(i) Many African countries have embarked on land and land-tenure reforms. As such, some countries have enacted land legislation and have put in place and adopted land policies or land-policy frameworks;

(ii) Most countries of southern Africa have undertaken agrarian reforms to address the problems of continuing racial inequalities in land-holding as a potential source of conflict and instability; land degradation affecting the communal areas where African populations are concentrated; and the development of viable systems of land administration for communal lands;

(iii) SADC has established a land reform technical support facility, intended to provide access to advice, expertise, training and technical support on different aspects of land reform to member States from within the region, drawing on international expertise where required. In addition, there are a number of national and regional civil society network organizations addressing land and natural resource rights and policies in the region;

(iv) Civil society land alliances or LandNet chapters, as well as civil society organizations concerned with gender and land, have been established in some countries and subregions for advocacy, dialogue and partnership with Governments, and they meet periodically to exchange lessons and address common issues;

(v) Many of the francophone countries in West Africa have introduced *gestion de terroir* programmes to improve the management of village lands and natural resources;

(vi) Local conventions at different territorial scales, involving different social groups and village communities alongside local governments and development agencies, have been introduced in some countries in West Africa to regulate inter-group utilization of land resources. Some countries in the subregion have also developed pastoral codes — framework laws that enable pastoral communities to establish jurisdiction over local territories, obtain freedom of movement in cattle corridors and negotiate access to more extensive grazing and water resources under the primary jurisdiction of other groups, on which they rely in the dry season;

(vii) In the Sahelian countries, farmers' organizations are also active players in land debates, and intergovernmental policies, policy responses to lessons learned and convergent land policies are being fostered;

(viii) Some North African countries have undertaken major land reforms, thus achieving significant benefits in favour of peasant farmers, landless workers and pastoral nomads; and substantially improving access to European export markets, while reducing the high rates of malnutrition, illiteracy and landlessness that had prevailed in the low-income, traditional, rain-fed agricultural sector;

(ix) The State-interventionist approaches adopted (supported by high levels of capital investment) by the land reforms included recovery of foreign-owned lands; ceilings on maximum land ownership in Algeria and Egypt; and provision of subsidized modern agro-inputs, irrigation, free extension services and primary education;

(x) Development assistance is being provided for technical and human resource capacity-building in the land sector in Africa;

(xi) A land initiative for Africa has been launched and is being implemented to put in place a pan-African framework for land policy and land reform in the region. The framework will, among others, provide a basis for political commitment by African nations, developing clear guidelines and benchmarking good practices for land-policy reforms and the performance of land institutions, serving to promote land policy to underpin agricultural transformation, and promoting programmes for tenure upgrading to secure urban land rights;

(xii) Land-related human capacity-building activities focusing on the region are under way. Training packages, among others, transparency in land administration, gender-sensitive land tools, grass-roots participation mechanisms and good land governance are being rolled out or developed.

Challenges and constraints

5. The meeting identified the following major challenges and constraints in this area:

(i) The capacity of State land institutions is generally weak and restricted to the administration of formal property rights, which are usually only a very small fraction of the full range of interests in land;

(ii) Under-funding of land reform programmes;

(iii) Inadequate land-use planning, leading to allocation, development and encroachment of real estate investments on fertile land, which hampers the development of sustainable agriculture;

(iv) The ability of African Governments to deal with land policy processes is hampered by a shortage of appropriate skills for the coordination of those processes, which entail complex, cross-sectoral and potentially controversial issues;

(v) The external technical assistance provided is sometimes poorly integrated into the national context and may involve attempts to introduce inappropriate and unsustainable technical systems and procedures;

(vi) Capacity in civil society is highly variable across African countries and often weak. Even where civil society is well developed and engaged in matters of governance and access to justice, activity does not necessarily extend to land issues. The existence of NGO capacity at the national level does not necessarily reach down and give voice to concerns at the community level;

(vii) There is inadequate knowledge management and information-sharing on land issues. As such, there is poor documentation and inadequate

dissemination of information on what has worked elsewhere, and a lack of empirical knowledge of national and local circumstances, country-specific and context-specific analysis of policy options and the implications of policy choice.

Lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions

6. The following are the main lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions identified by the meeting in this area:

(i) There is overwhelming presence of the State in land matters and this is one of the impediments to efficient and sustainable use of land. There is therefore a need to explore and establish systems of divestiture and privatization of land-services delivery, the strengthening of community land governance systems and the revesting of a radical title to land in favour of citizens or local community organs at large;

(ii) Formal land titling programmes have proved slow, expensive, difficult to keep up to date and hard for poor farmers to access. There is a need to explore alternative systems of land-rights documentation;

(iii) Although customary land rights differ from statutory rights in their origins and forms of documentation, they can be equally secure and they should be recognized in law. The effort to recognize and perhaps codify customary tenure must go further and look into and address its negative aspects, including gender and inter-generational exclusions;

(iv) It is necessary to overcome the dualistic legacies of colonial rule through equitable, consensual policies and coherent new legal frameworks that incorporate a plurality of forms of tenure that secure property rights for rich and poor alike, recognize secondary and collective rights, and avoid the pitfalls of drives for comprehensive individual titling;

(v) Progressive institutional change in land-sector agencies needs to be integrated and carried out within the wider processes of public-sector reform. In this respect, land administration institutions should be professionalized so that they can, among others, provide business-like, customer-oriented services, with the flexibility to recover their own administrative and technical costs from those users able to pay, and to determine appropriate staff incentive packages;

(vi) Land governance needs to be decentralized and appropriate capacity-building and technical assistance provided to countries and local authorities in the region. There should be clear definition of roles and responsibilities among land actors;

(vii) The commons, including forests, wetlands, water resources in lakes and river basins, should be safeguarded through land-policy reforms and programmes that include practical strategies to ensure secure access and the sustainable use of these resources;

(viii) Effective strategies and policies for the management of pastoral lands should be adopted to ensure harmony with sedentary farming and achieve sustainability;

(ix) Widespread land litigation and large backlogs of land cases in the courts are significant barriers to investment and land development. There is therefore a need to explore and establish appropriate alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are able to deliver settlements rapidly;

(x) Appropriate and secure land-tenure systems should be promoted to facilitate access to adequate housing, shelter and basic social amenities in order to combat rural poverty and improve the living conditions of the poor;

(xi) Market-assisted land reform remains problematic;

(xii) New approaches to the resolution of land issues in post-conflict situations need to be tested and put in place to help rebuild social cohesion in countries recovering from, and at risk of, conflict;

(xiii) African Governments and donors alike need to devise mechanisms to support land-policy reform and implementation, in line with the centrality of land issues in strategies for sustainable economic growth;

(xiv) Stakeholders must be effectively engaged at all levels of land-policy development and implementation;

(xv) Capacity-building for land reform is crucial and should be undertaken. There is a need to build and reorient capacity and expertise so as to develop appropriate land, administration systems to meet the needs of land users as a whole and assist with national development. Importantly, capacity needs to be built at the local level, not only in Government institutions but also in customary, community-based and private-sector organizations, to assume growing responsibilities for land management in partnership with the State. Secure institutional bases and mechanisms for shared learning are needed;

(xvi) There are fundamental needs to extend the coverage of cadastral systems and accessible land-registration and documentation procedures;

(xvii) Africa will need to develop its own centres of excellence in the areas of land policy, tenure and management in order to supply the knowledge and expertise necessary for the implementation of new land policies and the development of land institutions to support African economic development and the renewal of governance systems in the twenty-first century;

(xviii) The development and implementation of a pan-African framework for land policy and land reform should be pursued to promote and scale up land reform in the region.

III. Drought and desertification

Concrete actions taken and progress made

7. The meeting identified the following main concrete actions taken and progress made:

(a) In the area of preventing and combating desertification and mitigating effects of drought within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:

(i) All African countries are parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification of 1994 and are carrying out various activities to fulfil their obligations under the Convention;

(ii) Many African countries, with support from development partners, are at different stages in developing their national action programmes to combat desertification;

(iii) Implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification, although slow, has commenced in some countries;

(iv) Countries have set up national desertification funds, which serve as local and easily accessible sources of funding for the implementation of the priorities of national action programmes;

(v) Some countries are also establishing national coordinating bodies, which are charged with coordination, guidance and leadership in order to ensure cross-sectoral and integrated planning of desertification control programmes;

(vi) Some countries have embarked on integrating national action programmes into national development plans, especially the poverty reduction strategies. A few have already succeeded in mainstreaming the national action programmes and other sustainable land management priorities into these national development plans and poverty reduction strategies;

(vii) Subregional action programmes to combat desertification have been developed for the five subregions in Africa. The implementation of some of these subregional action programmes has commenced under the auspices of subregional institutions;

(viii) A regional action programme to combat desertification and mitigate impacts of drought is being developed through six thematic programme networks under the auspices of a regional coordination unit hosted by AfDB;

(b) In the area of combating desertification, mitigating and adapting to drought impacts through other strategies and programmes in agriculture and natural resources management sectors:

(i) Many African countries have formulated and are implementing national environmental policies, strategies and plans, which provide a broad policy framework for activities to combat desertification. These include national environmental action plans and national environmental policies adopted in some countries in the region;

(ii) Several countries have put in place or updated their legal frameworks in the area of agriculture and natural resource management to address drought and desertification;

(iii) Two thirds of African countries are at different stages of implementing national forest programmes to combat deforestation and ensure sustainable forest management;

(iv) Policies and plans on land and spatial planning have been formulated by some countries to address the problems in land-use planning;

(v) Some countries have developed agricultural sector policies and strategies, with increased emphasis on sustainable agriculture, that promote sustainable land management;

(vi) In the water sector, strategies developed by some countries of the region place emphasis on the conservation and rational management of water resources;

(vii) Some countries are implementing rural development strategies that contribute to the rational exploitation and management of natural resources, sustainable agricultural production and the diversification of rural income-generating activities;

(viii) Some countries have achieved increase in afforestation and land restoration from specific projects and innovative community initiatives;

(ix) At the regional level, a number of programmes pertinent to combating desertification and mitigating drought impacts have been developed, including, NEPAD/CAADP; the NEPAD environment initiative, which includes combating desertification as an integral and priority programme area; the AU-spearheaded green wall for the Sahara initiative; and the AU-ECA-AfDB initiative on land policy in Africa;

(x) At the subregional level, the area under irrigation in the SADC subregion has grown from 1.63 million ha in 1985 to an estimated 1.96 million ha in 2005; a regional programme for the integrated development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands, initiated by AU within the framework of a plan of action on the medium and long term to control desertification, drought and other natural calamities in Africa, is under implementation; and a new environment and natural resources strategy has been developed and endorsed in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region;

(c) **In the area of monitoring, early warning and adaptation to drought and desertification:**

(i) Some countries have established a desertification information system, as part of the national action programme to combat desertification process to assist in monitoring interventions to combating desertification and mitigate drought impacts;

(ii) A long-term ecological monitoring and observatory network has been established in the Sahel subregion and has helped observatories in 11 countries to gather information on the evolution of natural resources and the effectiveness of management systems;

(iii) A land degradation assessment project has developed and has tested effective assessment tools for land degradation in drylands through pilot projects and studies undertaken in selected countries in the region;

(iv) Regional climate outlook forums are convened annually in the Greater Horn of Africa, in South Africa and West Africa to elaborate and ensure the appropriate dissemination of consensual regional outlooks, bulletins and products about the next rainy season;

(v) A climate for development in Africa programme is being developed to guide the effective integration of climate information and services into development planning for Africa;

(vi) A number of centres charged with the timely monitoring of drought and its impact on agricultural production and issuing early warnings have been established, including the IGAD Climate prediction and applications centre in Nairobi, the SADC drought Monitoring centre in Harare and the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development;

(vii) More than 30 countries have put in place platforms for disaster-risk reduction as a way of shifting from disaster response to mainstreaming disaster risk. Some of these countries have succeeded in linking disaster-risk reduction to poverty reduction-related strategies;

(viii) Some countries have embarked on innovative market schemes, such as index-based weather insurance for managing risks associated with drought;

(ix) At the subregional level, IGAD has developed a subregional strategy for disaster reduction; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has approved a subregional common policy and mechanisms for disaster-risk reduction; SADC has revised its subregional strategy to take account of disaster-risk reduction; and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has established a subregional centre for disaster-risk reduction;

(x) The Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and a programme of action for its implementation (2006-2010) have been adopted to facilitate the integration of disaster-risk reduction into development programmes;

(xi) The African Drought Risk and Development Network has been established to promote the development of coordinated strategies for enhanced and effective drought management at the national level;

(d) **In the area of support for the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought:**

(i) Through national budgets, countries of the region are making provisions to fund directly or indirectly some projects and activities to address drought impacts and tackle desertification;

(ii) Under its operational programme 15 on sustainable land management, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is providing some support for programmes and activities to combat desertification and mitigate drought impacts, including national action programmes;

(iii) TerrAfrica has been initiated as a special catalytic partnership effort that aims to scale up harmonized support for effective and efficient country-driven sustainable land management practices in sub-Saharan Africa;

(iv) The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Global Mechanism is carrying out a number of programmes at the national and subregional levels to enhance the flow of financial resources for implementation of the Convention;

(v) *Chef de files* have been instituted under the Convention as innovative mechanisms for the mobilization and provision of financial and technical support for combating desertification;

(vi) National capacity self-assessments have been undertaken and have enabled countries in the region to review their capacity needs to address priority national and global environmental issues, and to prepare national capacity-development strategies and plans of critical actions related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(vii) The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building provides a means for assisting countries in addressing their capacity-building and technology needs in the field of environment. A pilot project on the implementation of the plan has been implemented in six selected countries in the region;

(viii) Many countries in the region have benefited from capacity-building programmes aimed at assisting them in integrating national action programmes into national economic frameworks and move from strategy development to effective implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, while some countries have received support to increase the capacity of Governments to mainstream environment- and disaster-risk-reduction into national development processes;

(ix) Some countries have strengthened lead research institutions and established joint research activities with international research centres in order to develop and promote technologies, including high-yielding and drought-resistant crop varieties;

(x) In the energy sector, programmes have been initiated to increase access to clean, renewable and alternative sources of energy;

(xi) There is a growing photovoltaic market, and successful programmes for improved cooking stoves in urban areas.

Challenges and constraints

8. The meeting identified the following main challenges and constraints in this area:

(i) The high level of poverty, particularly in rural areas, continues to be the overarching challenge and constraint to investments and the implementation of measures to address drought and desertification in the region;

(ii) Climate variability has been a major impediment to sustainable land management activities, which will be exacerbated by climate change that is projected to have devastating impacts in the region;

(iii) Poor coordination and collaboration among actors, insufficient political will, and a lack of in-depth understanding and appreciation of drought and desertification issues, especially their links as regards to, and benefits for, poverty reduction;

(iv) Weak institutional capacity, including poor set-ups, lack of legislative backing and inadequate human resources, which constrain the effectiveness of organs, such as national coordinating bodies, for desertification control programmes;

(v) Inadequate reform and enforcement of policies and legislation to guarantee clear legal ownership and access rights to land, water and other natural resources;

(vi) Lack of financial resources, which is a systemic and one of the most pressing constraints to most countries and regional programmes in the implementation of desertification control plans;

(vii) Resource users, especially the local people, do not have access to affordable credit facilities to acquire funding, which they could profitably invest in both tackling land degradation and sustaining their livelihoods;

(viii) Inadequate awareness programmes and information on drought, desertification and drylands and the difficulties encountered in accessing and sharing this information continue to hamper activities and progress;

(ix) It remains a challenge to develop, manage and implement processes that are responsive to local community priorities and are genuinely participatory and cross-sectoral;

(x) Limited development of economic and social infrastructure and services in drylands, resulting from low levels of investments, hampers access to drylands and does not provide enough incentives to attract and sustain other investments needed for sustainable land management in these areas;

(xi) Technology options that empower communities for sustainable land management remain largely inaccessible to, and unaffordable for, a majority of rural populations and the urban poor;

(xii) The high rates of prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, such as malaria, in some countries of the region pose both human and capital resource challenges to addressing drought and desertification in the affected countries;

(xiii) Political instability and conflicts faced by some countries in the region breed conditions, such as displacement and concentration of populations, destruction of natural resources and infrastructure, that favour land degradation and/or hamper the implementation of programmes to reduce poverty and address drought and desertification;

(xiv) Lack of synergies and coordination in the implementation of desert- and drought-related conventions, namely, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(xv) The integration of both conventional and indigenous knowledge systems in sustainable land management;

(xvi) The lack of coherent trade and trade-development patterns in drylands and hence the lack of capacity to explore opportunities for marketing the products of drylands.

Lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions

9. The following are the main lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions identified by the meeting:

(i) Need to ensure adequate commitment for the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the related decisions adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention, which encompass important guidance as regards to the implementation of the Convention for the period 2008-2018;

(ii) National development plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers, can be important platforms for securing attention and resources to address the impacts of drought and combat desertification. Therefore, there is a need to intensify efforts to systematically integrate priorities identified in the national action programmes and other sustainable land management processes into national development plans, such as poverty reduction strategies as a key means to mobilize implementation resources, and to foster medium- and long-term political commitment for drought mitigation and desertification control programmes;

(iii) There is a need to increase support and scale up the implementation of national action programmes and other sustainable land management plans, with a special focus on concrete ground community programmes and activities with the objective of achieving measurable results on sustainable land management and poverty reduction;

(iv) Establish accessible and innovative mechanisms for channelling increased levels of support, particularly financing, to farmers and other frontline natural resources managers;

(v) Mobilize and empower local authorities, civil society, non-governmental organizations (including youth and women's organizations), the private sector, local communities and other stakeholders, through increased sustainable land management capacity-building that is linked to tangible results in the areas of poverty reduction and integrative natural resources management;

(vi) Establish and promote incentives for, and address barriers to, sustainable agriculture development and sustainable land and other natural-resources management by

a. Providing dryland areas with increased access to appropriate and affordable agricultural technologies, affordable credit facilities and links to markets;

b. Processing and value addition, developing physical, economic and social infrastructure;

c. Enhancing access to electricity and alternative sources of renewable energy (other than firewood) for rural populations;

d. Carrying out reform and/or the effective enforcement of land and other natural resources regulatory frameworks to promote secure tenure and/or access rights to land, water and other natural resources;

(vii) There is a need to develop and improve the information base on drought and desertification; enhance both scientific and indigenous knowledge application through programmes for strengthening the collection of information through targeted research; establish comprehensive databases and information systems, including gender-di aggregated data; develop and apply benchmarks, indicators and methodologies for monitoring land degradation; and promote networking and centres of excellence;

(viii) Public awareness and education programmes, including formal education programmes on the sustainable use and management of forest and other land resources should be designed and conducted, with the involvement of civil society organizations, for local communities and resource users that are directly affected by drought and desertification;

(ix) Link and coordinate measures for combating drought and desertification with measures aimed at adapting to climate change and the biodiversity conservation so as to enhance synergy, diversify resources available for the implementation of national action programmes and related programmes to scale up sustainable land management programmes. In particular, land rehabilitation should be undertaken as a means to adapt to climate change;

(x) Strengthen management and adaptation to drought and desertification impacts, especially in the face of climate change and the high vulnerability of the region to climate change impacts, through, inter alia, programmes to enhance capacity for systematic climate observations, and timely climate information exchange, outreach and application;

(xi) Strengthen institutional arrangements and human resources capacity to provide effective leadership for coordination, planning, monitoring and championing of drought and desertification programmes at the regional, subregional and national levels;

(xii) Promote and support knowledge management, and access to appropriate affordable technology for improved agricultural production and sustainable land management;

(xiii) Strengthen capacity for the mobilization of financial resources, and provide increased funding for the implementation of national, subregional and regional programmes by integrating and prioritizing sustainable land management programmes within development assistance policies and programming; strengthening sustainable land management resources mobilization and financing mechanisms at the global, regional and subregional levels; and developing and implementing a clear agenda and fund-raising strategies for funding sustainable land management from local sources, including from the private sector and emerging schemes, such as payment for ecosystem services;

(xiv) The international community, particularly the developed countries, should increase the level of GEF funding allocated to operational programme

15 (sustainable land management), in the light of the funding levels allocated to other GEF focal areas;

(xv) Strengthen capacity for developing integrated programmes aimed at promoting synergies between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

IV. Africa

Concrete actions taken and progress made

10. The meeting identified the following main concrete actions taken and progress made:

(a) In the area of sustainable development governance in Africa:

Sustainable development framework

(i) The eight regional economic communities recognized by the African Union and ECA as the implementing bodies of NEPAD have been involved in the design and implementation of NEPAD programmes and subregional projects. The capacity-building needs of the regional economic communities is being assessed;

(ii) Many African countries have taken steps to create NEPAD focal points for the integration of NEPAD programmes into national development plans. These steps include designating ministers or setting up ministries as focal points for NEPAD;

(iii) The Partnership approach embedded in NEPAD has elicited significant international support for Africa. In this connection, regional consultation meetings of United Nations agencies working in Africa have been established to coordinate and ensure effective support to NEPAD;

Peace and security

(iv) The AU Peace and Security Council has been established and the capacity of AU to intervene and mediate in conflicts has been strengthened by the establishment of the African Peace Facility and support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture;

(v) The AU Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development has been developed and adopted;

(vi) Peace and stability is also being promoted through international bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as through regional mechanisms;

(vii) The United Nations/AU Framework for a 10-year capacity-building programme has been developed, including the establishment of effective early warning and crisis response systems;

Human rights

(viii) African leaders have affirmed commitments to human rights and rule of law through the Constitutive Act of AU, the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism, among others;

(ix) African countries have overwhelmingly subscribed to most international and regional human rights norms and standards, ratified numerous major human rights treaties, and enshrined these norms and standards in their constitutions and national legislation;

(x) Progress has been made on human rights and the principle of rule of law is respected in most countries;

Political governance and administration

(xi) Africa has benefited from democratic politics and practices and has taken significant steps in the last two decades. Competitive multi-party democracy has been enthroned in many African countries;

(xii) The African Peer Review Mechanism has been adopted and some 25 countries have acceded to this Mechanism aimed at promoting policies, standards and best practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development, and accelerated regional and economic integration;

(xiii) Electoral institutions are gaining more credibility and legitimacy with the move to relatively free and fair elections in many countries;

(xiv) Most countries have created watchdog institutions and some are trying to build effective anti-corruption commissions;

Economic and corporate governance and private-sector development

(xv) A NEPAD economic and corporate governance initiative has been launched to promote programmes aimed at enhancing the quality of economic and public financial management, as well as corporate governance;

(xvi) Several African countries have made progress in economic governance, public financial management and accountability, and the integrity of the monetary and financial systems;

(xvii) Countries have made efforts to promote private-sector-led growth and development;

(xviii) African Governments have continued efforts to expand and develop physical infrastructure to attract private investment and make it more profitable and efficient;

(b) In the area of poverty eradication and socially sustainable development:

Income poverty

(i) Although the real GDP growth rate for Africa continues to grow, the number of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has reduced marginally, from 46.8 per cent in 1990 to 41.1 per cent in 2004. The poverty

gap ratio declined from 19.5 to 17.5 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa during the same period. The incidence of poverty in North African countries has remained constant, at 2 per cent, for the same period;

(ii) Countries have developed national development plans that incorporate poverty reduction strategies;

(iii) Knowledge-sharing between countries on poverty and national development strategies is being enhanced through knowledge-sharing networks;

Gender equality for sustainable development

(iv) The Constitutive Act of AU recognizes the key role that women have played in development and calls for AU to adopt a gender-parity principle. The NEPAD secretariat has commenced gender mainstreaming and the mobilization of civil society organizations at the regional and national levels through regional economic communities;

(v) Regional economic communities have adopted gender policies, declarations and guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women;

(vi) An African gender and development index has been developed, and the African Women Rights Observatory has been set up to monitor the status of women and women's rights at the regional level;

(vii) African countries have ratified and in some cases aligned their national legislation to the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; some countries have also signed the Optional Protocol to that Convention;

(viii) Some countries have also signed and have begun ratifying the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa;

(ix) Some Governments have enacted or amended legislation on women's human rights and some have adopted constitutions that recognize gender equality;

(x) Several countries have significantly increased the level of women's representation in parliament; and women have also been elected and/or appointed into powerful decision-making positions in the civil and public services;

(xi) African Governments have established various mechanisms to mainstream gender in the formulation of policies, plans and programmes. Between 1995-2005, poverty reduction strategies and action plans of 48 African countries included gender concerns. Some countries have managed to reduce gender differentials in education through affirmative action and gender-aware policies;

Education for sustainable development

(xii) African countries have subscribed to the goal of achieving education for all by 2015 and many have undertaken education sector reforms;

(xiii) Enrolment in primary education has increased, but the number of out-of-school children remains high;

(xiv) The Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) has been launched and the Framework for Action endorsed, under the auspices of AU;

(xv) A detailed action plan has been formulated, under the auspices of NEPAD, to enable African countries achieve the Millennium Development Goal relating to universal primary education and to promote centres of excellence;

Health for sustainable development

(xvi) The AU/NEPAD Health Strategy, which offers a comprehensive integrated approach to addressing disease, and the Africa Health Strategy 2007-2015, which aims to, inter alia, strengthen health systems, have been adopted;

(xvii) AU has adopted the Brazzaville Commitment, which sets the direction for policies relating to HIV and AIDS and defines universal access targets for Africa until 2010, as well as the Abuja Call for Accelerated Action Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa;

(xviii) HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into all NEPAD programmes and the provision of antiretroviral treatment on the continent is expanding;

(xix) African countries are successfully responding to the HIV epidemic. Political support and willingness to address HIV/AIDS and its repercussion is now a reality in many countries;

Sustainable human settlements

(xx) Urban centres in the region have benefited through global urban management programmes, such as the safer cities, good urban governance and secure tenure programmes and campaigns;

(xxi) Countries have undertaken related initiatives, such as reviewing and reforming national policies and legislation on housing and access to land and secure tenure;

(xxii) Countries, as part of their poverty reduction policies and strategies, have introduced programmes on the provision of basic urban services; slum-upgrading and slum-prevention policies; and social housing schemes;

Water supply and sanitation

(xxiii) The African Minister's Council on Water has been established and is actively engaged in policy coordination and advocacy, taking into account, among others, the African Water Vision 2025, which has been developed and formally adopted;

(xxiv) The African Water Facility, which will provide support and funding to water-related programmes has been established and is operational;

(xxv)The NEPAD short-term action plan on infrastructure, which includes projects on water supply and sanitation, is under implementation;

(xxvi) In order to improve the status of water supply and sanitation, countries have undertaken such initiatives as the development and/or updating of national strategies and plans on water supply and sanitation within the context of poverty reduction strategies, increasing funding to water supply and sanitation, and carrying out policy and reforms;

(xxvii) Some countries in Africa are on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all countries meet these Millennium Development Goals;

(c) In the area of sustainable consumption and production:

Ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production

(i) The African Ten-Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production has been developed and a regional steering committee for the Programme has been launched;

(ii) An eco-labelling project is being implemented within the framework of the programme and aims to develop an Africa eco-labelling scheme;

Corporate social responsibility

(iii) The African Institute of Corporate Citizenship, a non-governmental organization, has been set up to promote the role of business in building sustainable communities;

(iv) African business associations and several stakeholders from civil society and academia are participating in global compact initiatives and a UNEP financial initiative. An African task force has been launched to support and expand sustainable financial practices in Africa;

(v) Several companies in Africa have become members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development;

Sustainable tourism development

(vi) The NEPAD Tourism Action Plan has been developed and approved;

(vii) Most African Governments have now included tourism in their national development strategies and some countries have started to adopt policies that create opportunities for the poor within tourism;

(viii) The establishment of trans-frontier conservation areas has created socio-economic opportunities for local communities living around these areas;

(ix) In addition, countries have also adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and are reporting on progress in implementation;

Sustainable industrial development

(x) The Africa Productive Capacity Initiative has been endorsed by the AU Assembly as the NEPAD Sustainable Industrial Development Strategy. The

African Productive Capacity Facility has been established as a financial mechanism to support the Initiative;

(xi) Through the Initiative, selected industrial sectors in Africa's five subregions are benefiting from technical assistance to increase manufactured value added;

(xii) Many countries in the region have been assisted in developing and implementing programmes to improve the competitiveness of selected industries and, wherever possible, identify new market opportunities;

(xiii) Cleaner production in the region is being promoted, including the establishment of, and collaboration among, national cleaner production centres;

(xiv) Countries have also established agro-processing ventures and medium-sized and microenterprises, and are gradually accessing finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for growth-oriented and competitive medium-sized and microenterprises, with an increased emphasis on creating opportunities for women;

Energy for sustainable development

(xv) Several regional energy projects have been prepared through the multi-donor NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility supported by AfDB;

(xvi) Energy planners in some countries are benefiting from technical assistance to enhance their capacity to effectively use integrated resource planning to mainstream sustainable development in the planning of investments in the electricity supply industry at the regional and national levels;

(xvii) New energy supply schemes have been designed that integrate energy services in the development of productive and income-generation activities, entrepreneurship and the promotion of indigenous energy resources;

Chemicals and hazardous waste management

(xviii) Many African countries have ratified major chemicals-related and waste-related Conventions, including the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions and amendments thereto. In addition, all but one of the countries that have ratified the Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation are African countries;

(xix) Some countries have also ratified regional agreements, including the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, adopted in 1991;

(xx) A number of projects are under way to implement a regional action plan for the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in the Africa region adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

(xxi) Many African countries have adopted policies and legislation on hazardous waste, including hazardous waste management, and are

implementing activities to support the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes;

(xxii) African countries have established three subregional centres and one regional coordinating centre to address specific subregional and regional needs in the area of chemicals and hazardous waste management;

(xxiii) The African obsolete pesticide stockpile project has been established to clean up stockpiled obsolete pesticides, catalyse the development of prevention measures and build capacity for chemicals-related issues;

(d) In the area of natural resource base of economic and social development:

Sustainable mineral resources development

(i) A number of initiatives, such as the African Mining Partnership, Communities and Small-scale Mining: Africa, the Africa Mining Network, the NEPAD spatial development programme and the Southern and Eastern Africa Minerals Centre, have been put in place to promote sustainable minerals development;

(ii) Efforts are under way to improve the harmonization of mineral policies, standards and regulatory and legislative environments at the national and subregional levels;

Freshwater resources

(iii) The Africa Ministerial Council on Water and the Africa Water Task Force have been established to enhance cooperation and coordination to promote the development and implementation of coherent policies and strategies for water resources management;

(iv) The water resources management component of the NEPAD short-term action plan has been developed and focuses on seven river basins, namely the Niger and Senegal basins in West Africa, the Congo and Lake Chad basins in Central Africa, the Nile basin in East Africa, and the Zambezi and Okavango basins in southern Africa;

(v) At the subregional level, the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses and the Nile Basin Initiative have been developed and are operational;

(vi) The Lake Chad Basin Commission has made significant contributions in the area of agriculture, fisheries and livestock;

(vii) An increasing number of countries are undertaking policy, legal and institutional reforms and developing strategies for water resources development and management, on the basis of integrated water resources management approach;

Coastal and marine resources

(viii) Most coastal countries in Africa are signatories to one or more multilateral environmental agreements that deal with marine and coastal management issues, including the Barcelona Convention (1976), the Jeddah Convention (1982), the Nairobi Convention (1985) and the Abidjan

Convention (1981), as well as the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1973) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982);

(ix) Many African Governments have put in place policies and legislation to put in effect the principle of integrated coastal zone management;

(x) The coastal and marine resources programme of NEPAD has been put in place to support the implementation of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, to contribute to the implementation of the African process and to assist African countries in implementing the relevant provisions of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;

(xi) A number of initiatives have been undertaken in the fisheries sector, including the establishment of the South-West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission and the implementation of the sustainable fisheries livelihood programme, in which 25 countries in West and Central Africa are participating;

Sustainable forest management

(xii) A forest programme has been developed as part of the NEPAD environment initiative;

(xiii) Regional and subregional agreements, partnerships and programmes to promote sustainable forestry management have been established;

(xiv) Substantial effort has been made, mostly by North African countries, to establish planted forests;

(xv) Two thirds of African countries have developed and are at different stages of implementing national forest programmes;

(xvi) Regional eco-certification schemes on timber production have also been initiated as part of the strategies to promote sustainable forestry management in the region;

Biodiversity

(xvii) AU has adopted the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources which commits African countries to development that is based on the achievement of ecologically rational, economically sound, and socially acceptable policies and programmes that recognize the human right to a satisfactory environment and the right to development;

(xviii) The NEPAD Environment Initiative encompasses programmes on conserving wetlands; preventing, controlling and managing invasive alien species; and cross-border conservation or management of natural resources, including forests and biodiversity;

(xix) Most African countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000), the Ramsar Convention (1971) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (1973);

(xx) Countries are translating provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity into action through the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(xxi) Countries have designated forests to be managed primarily for conservation of biological diversity;

Climate change

(xxii) A programme on climate change has been developed as part of the NEPAD environment initiative;

(xxiii) Capacity-building for monitoring, prediction and timely early warning in the region is being carried out by drought monitoring centres including the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development and SADC located in Nairobi, Kenya and sub-centres in Niamey, the Niger, and Harare, Zimbabwe;

(xxiv) African countries have ratified and are at different stages in implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992;

(xxv) Several African countries have completed their first communication and have begun their second;

(xxvi) African countries are also at different stages of preparing their national adaptation programmes of action;

(xxvii) Forty-six countries have ratified or acceded to the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and are engaged in its implementation;

(xxviii) Some countries are being supported to develop projects for funding within the framework of the Clean Development Mechanism;

Natural disaster risk reduction

(xxix) Under the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and a programme of action for its implementation, national disaster management organizations have been established, legislation is in place, a number of policy statements have been articulated both in disaster and non-disaster periods, and political commitment towards disaster risk reduction has been gradually increasing in sub-Saharan Africa;

(xxx) Countries have incorporated aspects of natural disasters in their poverty reduction strategies;

(xxxi) Arrangements within most North African countries exist for emergency management and are organized and coordinated at the national level, but do not deal with disaster risk reduction holistically; it must therefore be concluded that disaster risk reduction in the region is underdeveloped;

(e) In the area of means of implementation:

Domestic resources

(i) In order to reduce poverty, most African countries have adopted comprehensive national development plans, encompassing poverty reduction

and wealth creation strategies. These are being funded through national budgets. Further, in their quest to attain the Millennium Development Goals, many African countries are adopting Millennium Development Goal-based poverty reduction strategies as their national development planning frameworks;

External resources

(ii) The external capital flows in addition to domestic capital are very small compared to the developmental needs of African countries. Despite the recent increase in ODA, very few countries account for the larger share of the continent's receipt;

(iii) Attempts to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid are being made through such initiatives as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the ECA/OECD/DAC mutual review on development effectiveness;

(iv) Several actions, such as enacting attractive and liberal investment codes for incoming investments and the creation in 2005 of an investment climate facility, have been undertaken by African countries to attract foreign direct investment (FDI);

(v) Although the bulk of FDI flows into the natural resource sector in many African countries, FDI flows to the service sector, in general, and the electricity, wholesale and retail subsectors, in particular, have been on the rise in recent years;

(vi) There has been some diversification of the sources of FDI with the increasing Asian investments in Africa;

(vii) The HIPC initiative has delivered debt relief to 15 African countries;

(viii) Under bilateral debt relief initiatives, individual donors have extended significant debt write-off to some African countries;

South-South cooperation

(ix) South-South cooperation (including Africa-Africa, China-Africa, Africa-Latin America, India-Africa and Asia-Africa cooperation), is being strengthened;

(x) Under China-Africa economic and trade cooperation, achievements have been made in the implementation of NEPAD programmes;

(xi) India has created a line of credit of $200 million for cooperation on NEPAD projects and has separately allocated $500 million, of which agreements amounting to $282 million have been signed under the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement;

Globalization and trade

(xii) African countries have become more engaged in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, and significant technical support by many institutions has been provided to the political process spearheaded by AU;

(xiii) Civil society organizations have been active in advocating for African priorities in multilateral trade negotiations;

(xiv) Several African countries and regional economic communities are involved in bilateral trade negotiations in order to diversify their export markets and enhance their integration into the global economic system;

Regional integration

(xv) Africa is making some progress in its attempts to integrate particularly in the areas of trade, communications, macroeconomic policies and transportation;

(xvi) Knowledge-sharing on best practices among regional economic communities is ongoing in the context of regional integration;

(xvii) ECOWAS and EAC have made significant progress on supporting the free mobility of people;

(xviii) ECOWAS, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and SADC have had success in the area of peace and security;

(xix) Some regional economic communities have established institutions to support regional financial cooperation in order to advance economic integration;

Transport for sustainable development

(xx) African countries have adopted the successor arrangement of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa with a view to developing integrated transport and communication systems to provide the continent with safe, reliable, efficient and affordable infrastructure and services;

(xxi) African countries and regional economic communities have undertaken many policy reforms to attract the private sector and to establish road funds;

(xxii) A number of transport corridors have been identified for development in landlocked countries, many of which have developed bilateral and multilateral agreements and programmes of action with their coastal neighbours to facilitate the movement of goods and people;

(xxiii) A sub-Saharan Africa transport policy, a regional economic communities transport coordination committee and a NEPAD infrastructure programme short-term action plan have been established;

(xxiv) A matrix of transport targets and indicators for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals was adopted at an AU summit held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in 2005;

(xxv)The NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility has been established and is operational as a multi-donor facility;

(xxvi) The air transport subsector has received a major breakthrough since the adoption of the Yamoussoukro Decision in 1999;

Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development

(xxvii) The NEPAD science and technology consolidated plan of action and the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology of AU have been established;

(xxviii) Subregional cooperation in science technology and innovation is strengthening, particularly in southern Africa with the development of protocols for cooperation;

(xxix) The use of ICT is being encouraged through such initiatives as the Technology in Government Award launched in 2005;

(xxx) Some African countries are in the process of establishing policies and institutions on science technology and innovation for sustainable development;

(xxxi) Communities of practice are being strengthened in some countries and regions to generate data and provide policy advice for science-based decision-making;

(xxxii) Most African countries have developed national information and communication infrastructure policies and plans within the framework of the African information society initiative;

Capacity-building

(xxxiii) African countries have partnered with many institutions in an effort to address the challenges of capacity-building in Africa;

(xxxiv) African institutions, such as the African Capacity-Building Foundation and the African Economic Research Consortium, have added value to capacity-building in Africa;

(xxxv) Under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund, three African regional technical assistance centres have been established to support poverty reduction strategy processes;

(xxxvi) AU/NEPAD has recently developed a capacity development strategic framework, which will guide capacity-building activities on the continent.

Challenges and constraints

11. The meeting identified the following main challenges and constraints:

(a) **In the area of sustainable development governance:**

(i) Inadequate integration of NEPAD and AU Commission activities;

(ii) African countries have established regional mechanisms for promoting and enforcing human rights agreements. The international community should assist these regional mechanisms in relation to peace and security and human rights;

(iii) More work needs to be done to enhance sound public financial management and private-sector development;

(b) In the area of poverty eradication and socially sustainable development:

(i) Unstable macroeconomic conditions;

(ii) Sustaining high levels of growth and ensuring that growth provides employment opportunities are key challenges to reducing income poverty;

(iii) Income poverty and uneven distribution of wealth;

(iv) Persistent gender inequality in the areas of agriculture and rural development continue to undermine agricultural productivity and overall economic growth;

(v) Weak institutional capacity;

(vi) Insufficient investment in infrastructure;

(vii) Natural disasters;

(c) In the area of sustainable consumption and production:

(i) High levels of poverty in Africa;

(ii) Inadequate awareness and lack of capacity;

(iii) Inadequate policies, legislative frameworks and strategies, as well as insufficient harmonization of laws, regulations, codes and standards, and poor enforcement;

(iv) Lack of business incentives, low skills levels and limited capacities;

(v) Political instability, wars and terrorist attacks; leakages and limited linkages to the local economy are specific constraints to sustainable tourism development;

(d) In the area of natural resource bases of economic and social development:

(i) Innovation, investment, distribution, governance, macroeconomic and capacity challenges limit the sustainable development of mineral resources;

(ii) Poverty, weak national institutions with poor technical and financial capacity and, in some cases, fragmented or overlapping functions and actions;

(iii) Low levels of research and scientific capacity;

(iv) Low access to appropriate and efficient technology;

(v) Poor understanding and appreciation of natural resources issues, especially their links with, and benefits to poverty reduction;

(vi) Lack of capacity for natural resources valuation, accounting and use of appropriate economic instruments and the design of indicators for sustainable development;

(vii) Lack of adequate political and financial support;

(e) In the area of means of implementation:

(i) Inadequate integration of employment creation into macroeconomic policy frameworks;

(ii) Low savings rates and low and unpredictable ODA flows;

(iii) Insufficient debt forgiveness and external trade barriers;

(iv) Low supply capacity;

(v) Lack of capacity, lack of appropriate and adequate policy coordination and lack of implementation and harmonization of national laws in the transport sector;

(vi) Inadequate government initiatives and investment in proper science technology and innovation strategies, systems, policies, capacities and institutions;

(vii) High licensing fees, lack of national standards and high infrastructure costs in the ICT subsector;

(viii) Poor coordination and inadequate integration of efforts in capacity-building;

(ix) High dependence on external capacity.

Lessons learned and the recommended priority approaches and actions

12. The following are the main lessons learned and recommended priority approaches and actions identified by the meeting:

(a) In the area of sustainable development governance in Africa:

(i) It is important to integrate NEPAD into AU structures and processes and provide greater support for the private sector and promote more outreach to civil society;

(ii) Expand capacity-building, including technical and financial assistance to AU, regional economic communities and countries;

(iii) The trend towards peace, stability and democratization should be supported and consolidated;

(iv) Build on the emerging structures and practices and consolidate progress recorded in the area of political governance and administration;

(v) In the area of economic and corporate governance and private-sector development, there is need to ensure that the capacity to implement well conceived reforms are available;

(vi) Adopt a holistic approach to addressing the problem of governance and improving public financial systems and management;

(b) In the area of poverty eradication and socially sustainable development:

(i) Sustain high growth rates to financially empower countries to alleviate poverty;

(ii) Adopt holistic multiple strategic interventions in a wide range of areas;

(iii) Within the agriculture sector, including livestock, provide additional resources, enhance the adoption of better farming practices and improved technology, create the right conditions for investment and effective market functioning, and undertake reforms that promote the structural transformation of agriculture and the rural economy;

(iv) Mainstream gender issues into economic analyses and poverty-reduction strategies and actions, and provide technical training for women and girls in operation and maintenance;

(v) Institutionalize policies that guarantee gender equality, and replicate the AU principle of 50/50 gender parity;

(vi) Intensify efforts to build upon success so far achieved in the education sector, including implementing policies that enhance access, equality and equal opportunities for boys and girls, rich and poor;

(vii) Health interventions should be adequately designed and implemented in order to achieve immediate results and improve survival of infants, children and women;

(viii) Activities that aim to promote sustainable human settlements and urbanization must include access to land and security of tenure, along with an adequate mechanism for financing housing and shelter for the poor. There is a need for slum prevention and slum-upgrading, using local resources and technology, and for promoting employment creation;

(ix) Sustainable water supply and sanitation calls for user-friendly, long-term strategies and plans for investments and the development of urban and rural water and sanitation infrastructures, as well as undertaking institutional and legislative reforms;

(c) In the area of sustainable consumption and production:

(i) Political momentum and commitment for the effective implementation of the African Ten-Year Plan should be maintained;

(ii) Sound corporate governance and risk-management systems to successfully implement policies and measures to address environmental and social challenge should be promoted;

(iii) Sustainable tourism development should take into account risk factors; ensure effective market price value, quality of products and meaningful community-private-public partnerships, supported by policies that influence flows to the poor;

(iv) Interventions in sustainable industrial development should improve productivity and investment, with a focus on structural issues, especially the

need for domestic capacity-building, the strengthening of domestic factor markets and the supply of public goods;

(v) The problem of access to modern energy in rural and peri-urban areas should be addressed in national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies and national strategies for sustainable development;

(vi) Furthermore, policies, strategies, legal and regulatory frameworks that are conducive to an attractive national investments climate should be established;

(vii) Countries should target analysis at understanding the concrete impacts of chemicals and hazardous wastes on key development issues to help in effectively mainstreaming chemicals management into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies;

(viii) Synergies between chemicals-related and hazardous waste-related multilateral environmental agreements should be enhanced at all levels;

(d) **In the area of natural resource bases of economic and social development:**

(i) Countries should strengthen natural resources governance systems at all levels; reinforce institutional capacity, including human, technical and financial; adopt and implement effective policies and legislation; and foster stakeholder ownership and local participation in natural resources management and development;

(ii) Regional and subregional initiatives should be linked and coordinated with national development processes in order to achieve greater impact;

(iii) Appropriate incentives should also be provided to encourage all stakeholders to become involved in sustainable natural resources management and development;

(iv) Enhancing adaptive capacity and increasing resilience through approaches that foster sustainable development should be key climate change interventions;

(v) Enhance and promote policy coherence and integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation concerns into priority development policies and programmes;

(vi) Countries should increase political support to natural resources management and development, climate change and disaster risk reduction programmes;

(vii) Promote environment and natural resource economics to ensure equitable growth and sustainable development;

(viii) Countries also need to effectively integrate strategies and action plans of all natural resources sectors into national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies;

(e) **In the area of means of implementation:**

(i) Countries should promote pro-poor and equitable growth if growth is to have a significant positive impact on poverty, and should also institute broad policy measures to sustain growth;

(ii) There is a need to better integrate capital flows policies into national economic development policies by providing incentives for investments that promote both domestic and foreign investments that are export-oriented and have large positive impacts on wealth and employment creation;

(iii) In addition to mobilizing domestic resources, there is need to advocate for external aid in order to achieve and sustain higher levels of GDP growth rates and to accelerate poverty reduction, as well as to ensure that new aid is in the form of grants and not loans, so as to prevent a new round of external payment crises;

(iv) Development partners should extend debt cancellation to all African countries;

(v) There is need to further coordinate and harmonize policies and positions for success in the global trading system and to combine trade reforms with complementary adjustment support measures;

(vi) In the area of regional integration, it is crucial to promote collective efforts, with a dynamic political commitment to integration, and to expand opportunities for investment that increase African incomes and tap unexploited resources;

(vii) There is a need to increase the financing of the infrastructure sector and adjust policies in order to build physical and human capacities, modernize management, attract the private sector and improve transport facilitation;

(viii) African countries should invest in youth and children in the area of basic education, science and technology, and should also ensure a political setting that prepares them well for future leadership responsibilities;

(ix) Promote awareness, policy analysis and advocacy on science technology and innovation;

(x) In the ICT subsector, African countries should better position themselves, especially in the areas of infrastructure, outsourcing and external employment opportunities, to absorb excess skilled human resources;

(xi) Various African countries stand to benefit through the possible establishment of regional satellite facilities as part of the square kilometre array initiative, thereby creating the possibility of enhancing local economies and scientific innovations;

(xii) Adequate and appropriate capacity in Africa requires Governments to ensure that capacity-building programmes clearly tie in with, and take forward, the developmental agenda; and that capacity-building strategies are well coordinated and integrated.

V. Conclusion

13. The meeting acknowledged that some progress has been made in meeting some of the commitments and targets under the cluster of issues considered. However, it concluded that many challenges remain and efforts must be intensified if the objectives of reducing poverty and placing countries in the region on a path of sustainable growth and development, both individually and collectively, are to be achieved in a balanced manner in urban and rural areas.

14. The meeting emphasized that the challenges faced and the desired development outcomes are all interlinked. It underscored the need to avoid compartmentalizing the issues and to go beyond piecemeal solutions in addressing challenges and therefore implementing measures to attain the Millennium Development Goals and achieve sustainable development. The meeting therefore called for increased vigour in promoting the balanced integration of the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, and putting in place institutional and strategic frameworks that adequately respond to the requirements of sustainable development. The meeting further called for the synergistic implementation of the Rio and other multilateral agreements.

15. The meeting called for partnership approaches among development partners, Governments, the private sector and civil society in order to optimize the outcomes of their mutually supportive roles. The need for programmes with a sharper livelihood focus on local people and that seek to meaningfully engage them in addressing problems and challenges at the local level was underscored as one of the major avenues that can yield tangible benefits, including agricultural transformation, sustainable land management and improved livelihoods.

16. The meeting also called for specific partnership approaches to enhanced national sustainable development consultations, poverty reduction strategy papers, and development assistance frameworks, land use planning and other similar processes are needed. Emphasis on private sector and civil society participation that links resources earmarked for these processes with the objective to increase the inclusion and voice of rural populations would benefit from mechanisms to track government requests and a common format for sharing the outcomes of consultations across the African continent.

17. While expressing deep appreciation for the support provided, the meeting called on development partners to increase their support, including through meeting their pledges for development, financing, particularly as agreed in Rio (1992), Johannesburg (2002), Monterey (2002) and the World Summit Outcome (2005) and various G-8 summits. In that respect, it underscored the need for rationalized donor procedures and conditionalities to enable easy access and faster processing of funding requests, particularly for rural development actors and farmers.

18. The meeting also stressed that expansion of markets, particularly for agricultural products, is an essential and key requirement for achieving sustainable agriculture and rural development and sustainable growth in the region. Further, it pointed out that clearer structures of property rights can provide a foundation for the structural transformation of Africa's economies, which in most cases is led primarily by agriculture. In addition, where land has been inequitably distributed since colonial times, more equitable patterns of land ownership can generate higher levels and broader-based patterns of economic growth.

19. The meeting highlighted the need for the international community to reinvigorate its commitment to combating land degradation and desertification. The meeting therefore called for increased and stable investments, on an urgent basis, in sustainable agricultural practices, including sustainable land management, and the implementation drought-risk-management strategies.

20. The meeting emphasized the need for increased political will and stronger overall commitments from policymakers at all levels if the goals and targets agreed upon at various levels are to be realized. The meeting also emphasized the need to

create job opportunities for the young and future generations, as well as the need for the non-violation of human rights.

21. The participants endorsed the outcome of the meeting for presentation as Africa's contribution to the sixteenth session of the Commission.